United Nations A/C.3/55/SR.10

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
13 December 2000
English
Original: Spanish

Third Committee

Summary record of the 10th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 2 October 2000, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Gittens-Joseph ..... (Trinidad and Tobago)

Contents

Agenda item 105: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*)

Agenda item 106: International drug control (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

00-66848 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 105: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/55/119, A/55/156, A/55/162-S/2000/715 and A/55/257-S/2000/766; A/C.3/55/L.3, L.4 and L.5)

Agenda item 106: International drug control (*continued*) (A/55/68-S/2000/377, A/55/126, A/55/133-S/2000/682, A/55/257-S/2000/766, A/55/260-S/2000/108, A/55/326-S/2000/834 and A/55/375)

1. **Mr. Al Saidi** (Kuwait) said that he welcomed the reports on the global problems resulting from drug trafficking and organized crime, the results of the consideration of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols, which were to be adopted by the General Assembly and signed in Palermo by the end of 2000.

2. Kuwait attached great importance to the issue of organized crime and drug trafficking. In that regard, a criminal law establishing a series of penalties for those who trafficked in, used or facilitated the use of drugs was currently in force. Act No. 48 of 1987 on combating psychotropic substances regulated the latter's use and sale and adopted a rational approach which viewed drug addicts not as criminals, but rather as sick people so that they could have recourse, on a voluntary basis, to rehabilitation centres without acquiring a criminal record. A decree issued by the Emir in 1989 had established a national anti-drug commission which was responsible for setting national policy, coordinating the efforts of the Government and civil society and promoting cooperation between those two sectors. It also developed and implemented plans and programmes in that area and assessed results from the point of view of prevention and rehabilitation. Lastly, it was responsible for increasing public awareness and gaining the cooperation of the media.

3. By Act No. 6 of 1995, Kuwait had ratified the Arab Convention against Illicit Use of and Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and, at the international level, it had ratified the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in October 1989. The Political Declaration adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to countering the world drug problem together, had given a new international dimension to the issue, and it was essential to help affected countries eliminate cultivation of the opium poppy, coca bush and cannabis for hashish production through alternative crops that would guarantee them sufficient revenue.

4. The activities of Kuwaiti civil society were making a major contribution to efforts to combat the drug problem in the health, education and social sectors. As for the question of supply and demand, Kuwait was considering imposing strict limits on the demand for narcotic drugs and, to that end, would adopt a series of regulatory measures that would be consistent with international norms on the issue.

5. **Mr. Moniaga** (Indonesia) said that the issues of crime prevention and criminal justice and international drug control had long been of interest to his Government, as they were essential to the creation of stability and the protection of development achievements. Only through international cooperation could an effective international strategy be undertaken. Greater donor confidence had enabled the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme to expand its operational activities. He looked forward to continued strengthening of that capacity within the context of global programmes to combat corruption, trafficking in human beings and transnational organized crime. The requisite resources should be made available for that purpose. He welcomed the outcome of the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which had recognized the need to act globally and had represented a step forward in strengthening the international response to transnational crime. He particularly welcomed the adoption of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice, which provided comprehensive guidelines for actions to be taken and strengthened the commitment to intensify bilateral and multilateral cooperation. He stressed commitment to strengthening international cooperation in order to promote growth and sustainable development and to eradicate poverty and unemployment. Such a balanced approach was fundamental to the adoption of any anti-crime package which included initiatives to combat crime as well as prevent it. Adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime would provide a new mechanism that would harmonize the actions of different legal systems and further strengthen international cooperation and assistance. There was a need for increased cooperation and coordination with

neighbouring countries and at the regional level; a regional seminar on the assessment and classification of adult offenders and juvenile delinquents had been organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Within the framework of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Indonesia was continuing to work for action at the subregional level. That work was being accomplished through such means as the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime, which established a cohesive strategy on the issue.

6. His delegation reaffirmed the importance of anti-drug measures adopted by ASEAN, which had launched a new regional plan with measurable targets in the fight against illicit drugs in the region. His Government looked forward to taking part in the meeting to be held in Bangkok with the goal of eradicating the drug problem in all the ASEAN countries by 2015.

7. International cooperation was essential to combating illicit drugs and psychotropic substances. A balanced approach should be taken with a view to reducing both supply and demand. The developing countries needed assistance in that regard and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) should play a major role in sharing best practices in prevention, education, treatment and rehabilitation. His delegation hoped that sufficient attention would be paid to the issue of whether examples of best strategies should take into account countries' different social and cultural backgrounds and should adapt to conditions in the developing countries, since the latter had limited financial resources. The growing use of minors in production and trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances was a matter of concern, as was the alarming increase in drug abuse among children. All States should give top priority to prevention, and protect children from the scourge of drugs. In Indonesia, emphasis was being placed on warning young people of the dangers of drugs, a whole series of preventive measures was being implemented and progress was being made in bolstering the legal framework in order to effectively combat drug abuse and trafficking.

8. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba) said that, despite considerable efforts at the international and national levels to combat the scourge of drugs and related crimes, it had proved impossible to prevent the situation from worsening and leading to social emergencies in many countries. The fact that between 3 and 4 per cent of the world's population was affected showed the increasing scale of demand for illicit drugs which, together with globalization, had strengthened the worldwide market and organizations of drug traffickers. In addition to the need for political commitment by all those affected, the gravity and complexity of the issue called for genuine international cooperation to deal with all aspects of the problem. Increased cooperation with developing countries was needed to enable them to apply viable mechanisms in dealing with drug trafficking. The holding of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly had been a milestone in the promotion of that approach. Such international cooperation could exist only on the basis of shared responsibility, a comprehensive study of the various phases of the process, and equality among all those concerned; it would not be possible to consolidate it in future without respect for international law, particularly the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and renunciation of the threat and use of force. The struggle against drug trafficking could never justify violations of national laws, because that would undermine the validity of the principles governing international cooperation, which was the only viable means of dealing with the problem. His delegation once again condemned the unilateral actions undertaken by certain States, particularly the one which had the world's largest drug consumption, which had no right to assume the role of an international arbiter of good behaviour in the area of drugs, since it had obtained very meagre results through the application of its own measures. The system of certification made cooperation more difficult and contravened the most elementary rules of coexistence among States.

9. He praised the role of UNDCP, which was the main focus of concerted international action to control drug abuse. Thanks to the cooperation which had been established, Cuba had been able to expand staff training and strengthen technical and material support. Cuba supported the work of the International Narcotics Control Board, the sole independent world authority which was competent to assess impartially and objectively the steps being taken by States to help to strengthen a world narcotics-control policy and the development of effective international cooperation.

10. His Government was proud that drugs were not a major social problem among the Cuban population. At

the same time, it was fully aware that its efforts to prevent drug trafficking helped the international community in its struggle against that terrible scourge. The importance attached by Cuba to cooperation at the bilateral, subregional, regional and worldwide levels could be easily understood if one bore in mind its location in a geographical area close to one of the world's biggest centres of drug use. Cuba had amply demonstrated its determination to prevent its territory being used for illicit drug trafficking, and had taken the strongest possible measures to combat and prevent drug traffickers from using it as a natural bridge to reach United States territory. Since 1970 the Cuban authorities had arrested more than 700 foreign traffickers, and in the 1970s and 1980s alone they had seized and confiscated 103 foreign-owned aircraft and ships. Without such action by the Cuban authorities, more than 100 million doses of cocaine would have been consumed in the United States or other countries over the past five years. Cuba was making those efforts despite their enormous economic cost, ageing and insufficient material means, and the lack of official and stable cooperation from the country which was the main target of the traffickers who wished to transport drugs via Cuban territory.

11. Apart from occasional specific examples of cooperation, the United States authorities had not shown the political will to establish serious and stable cooperation with Cuba, which had entered into bilateral cooperation agreements to combat drug trafficking with 23 countries, and was cooperating with anti-trafficking bodies in a further 13 countries. His delegation reiterated once more the official offer of cooperation it had made to the United States Government in July 1999. It was not demanding anything, not even the ending of the economic and financial blockade, as a condition for concluding an anti-trafficking agreement which would benefit the United States much more than Cuba itself. His country would continue to fulfil its obligations, not only because it had to defend itself against the harm that drug trafficking could cause to its society, but also because it was an international duty and because of its moral commitment to populations affected by drugs in any part of the world.

12. **Mr. Ling** (Belarus), speaking also on behalf of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, said that transnational crime threatened the stability and prosperity of all States without exception. Of particular concern were the ceaseless attempts of criminals to infiltrate the structures of power and the intensification of illicit drug and arms trafficking, terrorism and trafficking in persons.

13. The United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme was an unparalleled tool for uniting efforts to combat crime; it should be strengthened, including in the financial area, and the Secretariat units dealing with crime control should also be strengthened. The documents elaborated during the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the ninth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice were of great value, especially the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice. His delegation welcomed the completion of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and would participate actively in the elaboration of the three protocols to the Convention against trafficking in women and children, the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and the illegal transporting of migrants.

14. In June the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States had adopted the intergovernmental programme on joint measures to combat organized crime and other types of criminal activity in the territory of the States members of the Commonwealth for the period 2000-2003, which constituted a solid basis for Commonwealth cooperation in that area. The meeting of the Commonwealth council of chiefs of security bodies and special services had, pursuant to the mandate given to it by the Council of Heads of State, examined the implementation of the programme and proposals relating to the activities of the Commonwealth Centre against Terrorism. The law enforcement bodies of the States members of the Commonwealth were continuing to carry out coordinated inter-agency crime prevention activities and special operations.

15. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) said that international drug control was a shared responsibility that required the adoption of additional and balanced measures, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, particularly full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for human rights.

16. Her Government was a party to the international agreements to combat illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances because it was convinced that illicit drugs were an enemy that was decimating young people and societies, and it had joined with the international community in an effort to put an end to that scourge. The use of funds from drug trafficking for illegal activities, including the financing of armed rebel movements which posed a threat to legitimate governments, endangered international peace and security; the collaboration of the international community and the relevant organizations of the United Nations system would be required to combat it.

17. Her country was one of the few States in which drugs did not pose a grave problem, but because of its geographical location, it was used as a transit country. Her Government was pursuing its efforts to combat the scourge of drug trafficking and had adopted legislation imposing the death penalty for drug traffickers. Her Government had acceded to all the international instruments concerning international cooperation in the field of crime control and its legislation contained provisions relating to offences against the environment, the extradition of offenders in accordance with international and bilateral treaties and agreements, corruption, bribery and illicit wealth. Her delegation reiterated its support for the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, whose signing, and that of its protocols, would support the efforts undertaken at the national and international levels and would speed up the implementation of the resolutions adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

18. **Ms. Chung** (Republic of Korea) said that while globalization had tremendous potential for economic growth and poverty eradication, it also had undesirable consequences, particularly in the areas of crime and drugs, which had transcended national boundaries. Nevertheless, globalization also provided tools for communicating and cooperating in order to cope with those problems, hence the importance of multilateral action. The Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice, elaborated at the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, contained a set of guidelines for international cooperation in that area and, once the General Assembly had adopted it, the international community must implement it faithfully.

19. The rapidity with which the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols were being elaborated showed the magnitude of the international community's common will and dedication to combating one of the greatest evils of the time. All Governments must support the adoption of those instruments, take part in the signing ceremony and strive for an early entry into force of the Convention and its protocols. At the same time, there was an urgent need for an international instrument against corruption, and it was to be hoped that an ad hoc committee to negotiate such an instrument would be established as soon as possible.

20. Controlling the manufacture and trafficking of illegal drugs was another serious challenge that was increasingly intertwined with organized crime, owing to the tremendous profits stemming from the market for illegal drugs. Drug control and crime prevention must be dealt with together. In that regard, the dual structure of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the Secretariat was particularly appropriate, and would be strengthened by the development of cooperation between the Centre for International Crime Prevention and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

21. With regard to the objectives set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly to stem worldwide drug trafficking and abuse by the year 2008, the Republic of Korea had formulated and had been implementing a national strategy since 1999. It was also participating in the activities of several regional cooperation mechanisms and had held periodic bilateral consultations with neighbouring States, with great success. Nevertheless, the proliferation of new synthetic drugs such as amphetamine-type stimulants were particularly worrisome because of the lack of information available on them. In that respect, the work of UNDCP to develop and promote techniques for identifying the origins of those drugs was commendable.

22. **Mr. Paribatra** (Thailand) said that it should be repeated time and again that illicit drugs posed a threat to mankind. That problem had undermined the capability of nations to fully utilize their human resources for development, and was linked on the national and transnational scales with organized crime,

money-laundering and corruption. It had to be addressed in all its aspects, including production, transit and consumption. No country could eradicate it alone and a comprehensive approach was needed at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, involving the active and coordinated participation of all segments of society — governments, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the media — as well as the international organizations concerned. Thailand wholeheartedly welcomed the priority given to the problem by the international community as reflected in the Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2). It also welcomed the conclusion of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols as a framework for more effective cooperation against crime, including drug-related crimes. The Government had implemented measures to address both supply and demand for drugs and to intercept the illicit drug flow through its territory, in addition to establishing the appropriate legal framework, including the 1999 anti-money-laundering law. Public-awareness campaigns and preventive education had been promoted, especially among children and youth, and a large portion of the national budget had been allocated to the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts, despite the country's economic difficulties.

23. Synthetic substances, particularly amphetamine-type stimulants, were aggravating the problem, as their low price and small size had led to widespread use among young people. Combating them was not an easy task because they were easily transported across borders and could be sold in the street unnoticed. In 1999, 50.25 million methamphetamine tablets had been confiscated which was 50 per cent more than in 1998. In the first four months of 2000, 20.29 million tablets had been confiscated. Thus, unless action was taken, they would very soon become drugs of choice. He therefore reiterated the call to the international community to give the same attention to the growing threat of methamphetamines as to the problem of heroin and other drugs.

24. Thailand placed on record its appreciation for its many friends and partners, without whose help its efforts would not have borne fruit. Given its geographical position, collaboration with neighbouring countries was essential. They had agreed to strengthen cooperation in such areas as law enforcement, information-sharing and training, and Thailand would continue to work actively with its neighbours in addressing the drug problem in bilateral, multilateral and regional frameworks so that sufficient resources could be mobilized to meet the challenge in all its dimensions and to realize the sense of shared responsibility expressed in various agreements.

25. Progress had been made in the context of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which at its 33rd Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok in July 2000 had agreed to move forward the target of achieving a drug-free region from 2020 to 2015. As announced at the General Assembly by the Foreign Minister, that would also be the goal of the international congress that Thailand and UNDCP would hold from 11 to 13 October 2000. Thailand appreciated the support of UNDCP in strengthening cooperation among countries of South-East Asia, as well as its financial and technical support.

26. Thailand urged the international community to remain resolute in addressing the drug problem in a comprehensive manner and on the basis of shared responsibility. They should strive, individually and collectively, to implement the outcomes of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, including tackling illicit manufacture, trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, controlling precursors, promoting judicial cooperation, reducing demand, countering money-laundering and eradicating illicit drug crops through alternative development.

27. **Mr. Ogonowski** (Poland) supported the statement made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union and said that drug trafficking, arms smuggling, slavery and corruption were only some of the illicit activities which posed serious threats not only to the internal order and development of affected countries, but in some instances, to international peace and security. Criminal organizations were increasingly engaging in violating arms embargoes, thus contributing to the fuelling of violent conflicts, and were highly efficient in exploiting for their own profit the positive changes that the world had undergone in the past decade such as the opening of international borders, the revolution in communications and freer trade.

28. Poland expressed its satisfaction that the work had been concluded on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the draft of which had been presented four years previously by the

President of Poland. That instrument provided solid grounds for inter-State cooperation, and the need for such an instrument had become increasingly evident in the past decade with the unprecedented surge in criminal activity, in many instances on a global scale. The Convention would fill a very important lacuna in international law, because participation in organized crime groups would be defined as a crime and measures would be included to combat money-laundering and to establish broad cooperation mechanisms between States. It was hoped that the negotiations on the three protocols would be concluded during the forthcoming session of the Ad Hoc Committee and be open for signature during the high-level conference to be held in Palermo in December. It was imperative for the success of the Convention for adherence to be universal. Bearing that in mind, Poland would take all the necessary steps for an early ratification and encouraged others to do likewise. Poland supported the idea of also elaborating an international convention against corruption, and joined those who supported further strengthening of the capacity of the United Nations to address the issue of international crime.

29. **Mr. Al-Rubaie** (Iraq) said that his country followed drug control activities with the greatest interest. Its national commission on drug control and the Ministries of Health and the Interior were complying with the country's obligations under the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 by implementing Act No. 23 of 1966. Iraq participated regularly in regional and international meetings and conferences on narcotic drugs such as the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, and Iraqi organizations working in that area strove to submit annual reports and statistics to the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

30. Thanks to the measures taken by the competent Iraqi authorities, Iraq was one of the few countries in the world where there was no drug abuse, no drug trafficking and no drug trade. There were no drug crops and no drug industry, and no history of dealings in chemical precursors. The Government regularly implemented special prevention programmes against narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and informed the various sectors of society about the dangers of those substances.

31. His Government regretted that, despite its precautions, the first case of narcotic drug cultivation and trafficking had arisen in the autonomous zone in northern Iraq, where central government authority had been withdrawn following the United States/United Kingdom military invasion. The fact that there was an administrative vacuum in northern Iraq had prompted the armed groups controlling the region to cultivate coca on a wide scale, and in 1999, the Government had seized 270 kilograms of hashish bound for neighbouring States. His delegation therefore called upon the international community to put an end to the grave situation in northern Iraq, which posed a continuing threat to the peace and security of Iraqi society and of bordering States, the latter having become transit zones for the shipment of those harmful substances.

32. **Mr. Apata** (Nigeria) commended the Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention for his comprehensive and informative introductory statement and thanked the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for its assistance to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency of Nigeria, which had achieved significant success in controlling drug supply. In the area of demand reduction, the Agency had put in place several programmes geared towards preventive education and awareness-creation on the dangers associated with drug abuse.

33. Drug addiction led daily to the loss of human lives, with many accidental deaths and violent crimes being attributed to persons acting under the influence of drugs. Drug abuse and illicit trafficking posed a major threat to all societies. In view of the global nature of the problem, the solution must of necessity be based on a holistic approach. Moreover, countering the activities of drug traffickers, who commanded enormous resources, required making the needed resources available at the local, regional and international levels. His Government was prepared to sign memoranda of understanding with countries that shared similar concerns and it assured all States that it would cooperate in the arrest, punishment and extradition of Nigerian nationals who violated the drug laws of any nation. It had enacted legislation providing for the forfeiture of the movable and immovable assets of persons convicted of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, which would ensure that drug traffickers suffered penalties

commensurate with their crimes. The Government also planned to strengthen preventive structures and to ensure that state and local government drug abuse control committees received adequate financial support to carry out their functions.

34. Corruption and money-laundering, like illicit drug trafficking, were activities that had been receiving priority attention from his Government in the one and a half years since Nigeria had returned to democratic governance. Corruption was a cancer that must be expunged and the Government was determined to fight it without making exceptions, as was amply demonstrated by its drive to recover money stolen from the public coffers. Substantial ill-gotten gains had been recovered both at home and abroad and many accounts abroad had been frozen. However, some of the Government's efforts to repatriate illegally transferred money had been impeded by complex legal procedures. His delegation thanked the members of the international community who had assisted those efforts and it appealed to countries where funds illegally transferred from Nigeria were deposited to cooperate in their repatriation. His Government's anti-corruption campaign had led to the establishment of a strong institutional framework against corruption, and an Anti-Graft Commission had been created recently with powers to investigate allegations and bring charges against alleged wrongdoers.

35. His delegation wholeheartedly supported all initiatives for the elaboration of an international instrument against corruption, as well as technical cooperation projects aimed at assisting Governments in their efforts to fight corruption. It hoped that the international community would move quickly from the mere endorsement of international agreements to the actions needed to rid the world of drugs, crime and corruption.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.